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The purpose of this study[1] was to collect and analyze all the material from Germanic Heroic Poetry which included the Hagen figure. It was found that the role of Hagen grew in the course of the centuries from that of a subordinate character in the oldest Eddic poem whose sole function it was to warn against the assassination of Siegfried to the villainous and yet heroic assassin of that fairy tale prince and finally to fairytale prince himself, for, in the seventeenth century Chronicle of the Island of Hven, he has become a blameless and noble hero.[2]

The origin of the Nibelungen figures has held considerable fascination for scholars spanning two centuries. Most of them have come to favor historical explanations because some of the figures have historical counterparts. The most obvious example is Attila, although it is interesting to look at the benign old gentleman of the Nibelungenlied and compare

him with the "Scourge of God." Gunther (Gunnar) also has historical roots and these are to be found in the proper geographical locale. Gundikar, whose kingdom was on the eastern bank of the Rhine (Worms was his capital), was conquered in 437 by Hunish mercenaries who had presumably been hired by Aetius. But when it comes to giving the Hagen figure historical origins, scholars must draw on considerably more imagination. At best they can isolate certain events in the career of the Nibelungen Hagen and draw parallels with isolated events experienced by historical personages with similar sounding names. The range of historical explanations varies from that of Heinzel[3], who would identify Hagen with Aetius, to Gudmund Schütte, who finds it simple to explain Hagen as a conglomerate of seven figures, two mythical and five historical: the Avar Chagan; the demonic ruler of the Holmrygi; Hacco, the legendary scoundrel of a passion play; the Northfrankish prince Cholderich; Chilperich of Tournay; Hagnericus; and Hagathien, Hagen's father in the Waltharius manu fortis. Schütte would equate Hagathien with Agetius (Aetius).[4] One also encounters N. Lukman, who, having equated the Hagen of the Hilde-Cycle with the Nibelung Hagen, builds a case for seeing Hilde as the Roman princess Honoria and Hagen as her lover Eugenius.[5]

Historical identification, moreover, raises the problem of localization. Here again, Hagen, called "Hagen von Tronje" in the Nibelungenlied, is especially difficult to trace. The much earlier Waltharius states that Hagen came "de germine Trojae". Most scholars use the Rhine localization of Gunther as their point of departure. Tronje, they state must be in the same general area. P. E. Müller states that the bishopric Xanten must be meant and points to its Latentrecht (1483) for documentation.[6] Here Xanten is called "Kleine Trojen", founded in the sixth century as a Roman colony: colonia Traiana. Lachmann and others after him favored Kirchheim.[7] An older theory concerning the area called Tronje is offered by Wilhelm Grimm[8] who cites some pre-Nibelungen evidence for the statement that the Franks had a tradition concerning their own Trojan origin. He quotes from the Gesta Romanorum (ca. 720) among other sources. And, most interesting of all, Roth[9] took up Grimm's claims and expanded them by showing that the Gauls had had a tradition concerning their own Trojan origin, and that this tradition had been taken over by the Franks after their conquest of the Gauls in the pre-Christian era. He quotes a letter written by a Greek to a contemporary of Vergil: "Aiunt quidam paucos post excidium Trojae fugitantes Graecos ubique dispersos, loca haec (Gallia) occupasse tunc vacua."[10]

Rydberg[11] adds fifty years later that the Romans, Gauls, and Franks were represented as having been one people at the time of the Trojan war. This statement gives indication of the compounding of the localization problem; there were entirely too many Trojan origin myths current to help us with the localization of Hagen. Very interesting is Grégoire's[12] theory which copes both with the name of Hagen and with his geographic origin; he refers to a twelfth century life of a saint written in Tongres which mentions a Hacco as a figure of local folklore. This reference, he believes, is to Gunther's ally whose name is lost but whose title is preserved in legend; the "Chagan of Tongres" was active with Gunther in 411; he was an administrator or prince and his name was Goar. The only difficulty with Grégoire's theory is that Tongres and Tronje do not seem to be identical.

We now come to deal with the most imaginative theories of all: those which would explain the origin of Hagen in mythology. The mythologists find parallels or analogies connecting Hagen and/or Siegfried with some of the known deities; they work with original explanations deriving from mythological localizations, theories dealing with natural, ethical or historical aetiology. These theorists treat the material on two levels: the <u>expliciter</u> level and the

intuitional! The first scholars to discuss the Nibelungenlied were the products of German Romanticism. In this school mythology was almost regarded as the password to understanding. In his "Talk concerning Mythology," Friedrich Schlegel stated: "Mythology is the hieroglyphic expression of the natural environment in the transfiguration of imagination and love." The exponents of the mythological origin of Hagen took their proof from the Waltharius; Walther called Hagen: "paliure" and 'spinosus." Grimm's Wörterbuch[13] defines OHG hagen: thorny bush, wielder of the thorny whip...paliurus, ligna spinosa." Lachmann,[14] certainly the greatest exponent of the mythological interpretation, compares Hagen to Hödr, the blind assassin of Baldr, whom Lachmann considers the mythological counterpart of Siegfried. Hödr slew Baldr with the thorny mistletoe; Hagen is paliurus and spinosus. R. Koegel[15] interprets hagu-na to mean "shade-like, ghostly." Hagen, the Niblung (Son of the mist), is a ghost who returns from the dead. Support for the connection of Hagen with death is found in the tradition which links thorny wood (Hagedorn) with executions and with the cremation of the dead.[16] Wilhelm Müller[17] traces Hagen to hage "breeding steer" and therefore considers Hagen: Chlojo, Chlojo bisinus, the steer-figured god of the Franks. Many of the other mythological

interpretations incline toward season myths. Wilhelm Scherer[18] sees Hagen as winter; J. G. von Hahn[19] sees him as the waning moon; C. Meyer[20], finding Hagen a dark figure, equates him with night because he slays the sun hero (Alkmaeon and Siegfried, whom von Hahn equates)!

Certainly a study of the theories mentioned thus far proves only that the problem of Hagen's origin has not been solved. The historians can point to similar names or to personages in similar environments while the mythologists' range traverses the sphere from the strikingly fine parallel of the Hödr-Baldr story to a patchwork quilt of season myths.

All the above offered theories work with the Waltharius and the Nibelungenlied which show Hagen as Guther's vassal. They fail to consider the Edda, however, which contains a number of poems concerning these figures. In the "Short Lay of Sigurd" (the Skamma), Hagen (Hogni) is Gunther's (Gunnar's) brother and functions as an adviser to the king.[21] In the interpretation to be offered here, we shall try to explain Hagen's name as a title referring to his function. The sources helpful to this approach are the Edda, the Waltharius, and the Nibelungenlied. This solution appears to have the advantage over the historical and the mythological approaches that it takes early as well as later sources into account.

Some work has already been done with the name. Seventy years before Gregoire, Karl Müllenhoff[22] already pointed out the parallel between Hagen and Chagan. But more interesting to us is his finding that the root hag- has the basic meaning of "joining, fitting together," hence "adapted, idoneus." Haguno, he states, is the man capable of certain accomplishments, capable of bearing and wielding arms. Hagen's father in the Waltharius, Hagathie, is synonymous with Hagustalt (modern German: Hagestolz), meaning warrior, since -thie equals -deo: "Knecht" (basic meaning: "youth, capable of fighting."). Hence, Müllenhoff concludes, Haguno simply means the "capable man."

Gustav Freytag[23] explains the Hagano spinosus of the Waltharius as the guardian of the borderlands, the lonely, hard-hearted, defiant warrior, the Hagestald (hagustalt). Philological confirmation for Freytag's intuitive insight may be found in Grimms Wörterbuch,[24] the pertinent volume of which appeared in 1877, six years after Freytag's statement. Hag, according to this comprehensive source, belongs to the Germanic root hag- meaning "beat, chop down, pierce": Gothic" hawan; AS: heawan. Tacitus reports in Germania that the Germans had the custom of marking off their lands from those of their neighbors with wooden sticks--hence the meanings "wooden fence,

palisade-like hedgework, a place surrounded by a fence (e.g., a pasture)."[25] The form that refers to thorny wood has the same root, but actually Hagen refers to a "living hedge", usually of thorny wood. In Northgerman sources especially, the fence of such an enclosure is usually called Hagen.

Without any reference to Hagustalt, one might thus conclude that Hagen's name refers to his function as guardian of borderland and defender of the royal family he serves, and in both these functions he would present a thorny exterior to aggressors, hence Hagano spinosus. As a protector of the royal family, he might well be called to family council and to service--including, if necessary, the assassination of his king's rival.

Further consideration of the term Hagustalt points still further in this direction. It is significant that Gunnar is called gramr haukstalda (emended by editor Sijmons to gramr hǫgstalda) in the Sigurtarkvita en Skamma (stanza 31). gramr means "lord"; hǫgstaldr means the younger son of a landowner according to Gering.[26] Such a son lived on a smaller, often adjacent piece of land (Nebengut) on a clearing (Gehau), had no claim to the main estate, which the firstborn inherited, was not allowed to have his own household, and therefore often entered the service of another lord for pay. From the last

mentioned custom, the term received the meaning "warrior" and "hero". Moritz Heyne[27] adds the information that the younger brother was under the guardianship of the first-born, and that the land he administered was called a hag. From Kluge (p. 292), we learn that the term hagustalt was already in Germanic law before the Anglo-Saxons moved to England, i.e., before the middle of the fifth century.

A monograph by Wolfgang Krause[28] attests to the age of the term. He deals with two runic inscriptions, one from ca. 400 A.D.; the other, dated between 450 and 550 A.D. The second is a funerary inscription found at Kjølevig; the first, found at Valsfjord states: ekhagustaldaRþewargodagas, which means I, a warrior, Godag's vassal. It seems reasonable to interpret hagustadaR as a proper name or title in the second inscription which reads: Hadulaik [lies buried here]. I, hagustadaR, buried my son here.

Returning to Gunnar, the lord of the haukstalda (høgstalda), we need to determine who these haukstalda were. The term may refer to all his mean, but with the Germanic legal background explained above, one might well apply the term to Gunnar's brothers. In the Skamma (stanza 18), Gunnar has three brothers: one is neither portrayed not given a name, but Gutthrom is the youngest, and then there is--Høgni. It remains to establish

this relationship between Gunnar and Hǫgni in an older source in order to show that there is an older tradition than the one followed by the author of the Waltharius, who makes Hagen merely a vassal to Gunther. The Waltharius, traditionally dated in the tenth century, is probably even older than that. Atlakviða, which may go back at least as far as the ninth century, portrays Hǫgni as Gunnar's brother. As a younger son, Hǫgni was then a haukstaldr, in charge of administering a hǫg, for the -n suffix, which goes back to IE *-en, *-on, can have the meaning "belonging to, administrator of," e.g., Gothic: þiuda (people): þiudans (king).[29] Hǫgni (IE *qagh-anen, *qaghanon) would then simply be a name stating function.

A conjecture made by Heusler[30] fits with this theory. He states that a lost "Hagensage" may have shown Hagen as the assassin of Siegfried, while the preserved Eddic material depicts another person "X," as the dissenter to the murder of Sigurd. One might well suggest that "X" was just another of the haukstalda. If Hagen (Hǫgni) is a title referring to a function, then the king would have consulted with all the Hagens concerning the fate of his brother-in-law; one Hagen may have advised against the assassination; another may have offered to carry it out. Since both Hagens were referred to by the same title, however, they may well have been merged in

a later version which treated Hagen as though it were a proper name. Once the two Hagens had thus been merged, morever, the new character named Hagen had become a very interesting and complex figure whose noble loyalty to his king offered a puzzling contrast to his treachery in slaying Siegfried. One might well conclude that the role of the newly created personality had to expand in later retellings as each narrator made the effort to cope with the striking contrast between loyalty and treachery.

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NOTES

[1]This study was first undertaken in connection with a dissertation submitted at Yale University 1955. The substance of this paper appeared in 1959 in Neophilologus under the title "An Etymological Explanation of the Hagen Figure."

[2]The oldest sources at our disposal are in the Edda: probably the fragment of the Old Sigurd Lay (Brót af Sigurdarkvitа), dated by Andreas Heusler, Nibelungensage und Nibelungenlied (Dortmund, 1923), p. 99, between the ninth and the twelfth centuries, and the Atlakvitа, dated by Jan de Vries, Altnordische Literaturgeschichte (Berlin, 1942), I, 138., as a ninth century poem at the latest. The sources which show an expansion of the Hǫgni-role are the Latin epic Waltharius Manu Fortis, dated in the tenth century (Heusler, Die Altgermanische Dichtung (Berlin n.d.), p. 144: "um 930"); the Short Sigurd Lay (Sigurtarkvida en Skamma), which de Vries (op. cit., II, 154-156) dates between 1150 and 1200; and the Atlamǫl, which Heusler considers to be much younger (Introduction to Atlamǫl in the Thule translation (Jena, 1914) and de Vries (p. 157) would place in the twelfth century. Vǫlsungasaga (c 1250, Heusler, Nibs. und Nibl., p. 28) is the youngest of the sources related to the Edda; one presumes that it contains a prose rendition of the lost Sigurtarkvitа en Meiri, the most elaborate Sigurd lay. The German Nibelungenlied draws from the same source as the Thitreckssaga, dated by Heusler (Nibs. und Nibl., p. 99) ca. 1250; he would date the Nibelungenlied ca. 1200. There are also Danish and Faroese ballads, the latter dated by Hermann Schneider, Die Germanische Heldensage (Berlin, 1928) I, 70) around 1400; finally there is the Chronicle of the Island of Hven (translated from Latin into seventeenth century Danish), dated by Schneider (p. 70) in 1603.

In the Brót, Hǫgni counsels against the slaying of Sigurd and yet it is also he who informs Gundrun that "we have slain Sigurd." In the Skamma, he is incorruptible, will not slay Sigurd, with whom he has exchanged oaths, even though he would receive a share of the treasure. In both versions Hǫgni is one of King Gunnar's brothers. The Atlakvitа also shows Hǫgni as as Gunnar's brother, who advises the king against the visit to Atli's court but performs great deeds of heroism there and dies laughing while his heart is cut out of his body. In the much more elaborate Atlamól, Hǫgni's role is enlarged and he has many more speeches; he dies in a snake-pit while playing the harp with his toes, and although Gunnar is still the last

to die, Hǫgni is certainly Gunnar's co-hero. The Vǫlsungasaga Hǫgni is very similar to the Atlamól figure and still Gunnar's brother.

In the Latin Waltharius Manu Fortis, Hagen is a vassal of King Gunther and forced to do combat against his friend Walther because the king insists on obtaining Walther's treasure. In the Nibelungenlied and the Thidrekssaga, he is eager to kill Siegfried and does so; in both sources, he displays the greatest valor at Etzel's (Attila's) court. Since the Thidrekssaga Hǫgni is the son of a troll, some fairy tale elements are emphasized in this depiction. These elements are expanded in the later treatments of the material in order to make Hǫgni more exotic, and, at the same time, increasingly important. In the Faroese Högnitattur (ballads) he is the principal figure but has lost all his realism; he is a powerful magician, a wonderfully manipulated puppet, and has acquired the partial invulnerability of Siegfried. It is ironic, however, that, unlike Siegfried, he is not a dragon slayer, but, instead, falls victim to a dragon. In the Danish ballads, he has no magic at his disposal but dies a puppet's death. Finally, in the Chronicle of the Island of Hven, we see Hǫgni cuckolded by Sigfred and most justified in killing his brother-in-law, for which he is cruelly tortured and finally killed through the wicked treachery of his sister.

[3]Richard Heinzel, "Ueber die Nibelungensage," Sitzungsber. der Kaiserl. Akad. der Wiss.--Wien, Phil. Hist. Kl., CIX (1865), 671ff.

[4]Gudmund Schütte, Sigfrid und Brunhild. (Jena, 1936), p. 81f.

[5]N. Lukman, "The Catalaunian Battles in Medieval Epics," Classica et Mediaevalia, X (1948), 60-131.

[6]Cited by Georg Lane, Unters. ü. d. Gesch. u. d. Verhältnis der nordischen und dt. Heldensage aus P.E. Müller's Sagabibliothek (Frankfurt/Main, 1932), II, 171.

[7]Karl Lachmann, Anmerkungen zu den Nibelungen und zur Klage (Berlin, 1836), p. 8. Lachmann calls it "Kirchberg."

[8]Wilhelm Grimm, Altdänische Heldenlieder (Heidelberg, 1811), pp. 434-438.

[9]K.L. Roth, "Die Trojasage der Franken," Germania I (1856), pp. 34-52.

[10]Ibid., 50. (Quoted from Müller, Fragm. Hist. Graec. II, 323)

[11]Victor Rydberg, Teutonic Mythology (London, 1907), I, 56-57.

[12]H. Grégoire, "Où en est la question des Nibelungen?" Byzantion, X (1935), 215-245; p. 222.

[13]IV^2, (Leipzig 1877), 150.

[14]Lachmann, op. cit., p. 344f.

[15]R. Kögel, Gesch. d. dt. Literatur I^2, (Strassburg, 1897), pp. 207-208.

[16]Jacob Grimm, Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer, 4th ed., II (Leipzig, 1899), 417.

[17]Wilhelm Müller, Mythologie der dt. Heldensage (Heilbronn, 1886), p. 46. Müller fails to account for the other figures in the material in a parallel manner, as does Fischer, Die Forschung über das Nibelungenlied seit Karl Lachmann (Leipzig, 1847), who suggests (p. 120) the identification of Hagen/Oegir, the son of the storm giants, but also fails to relate this identification to the problem of identifying the other figures.

[18]"Ueber das Nibelungenlied," Preussische Jahrbücher, XVI (1865), 256-258.

[19]J. G. von Hann, Sagwissenschaftliche Studien (Jena, 1876), pp. 290-292.

[20]Dr. C. Meyer, "Zur dt. Heldensage" Dt. Vierteljahresschrift XXXII/4 (1869), 43.

[21]Die Lieder der Edda, I, ed. B. Sijmons (Halle/Saale, 1906), 371.

[22]"Zeugnisse und Excurse zur dt. Heldensage," ZfdA, XII (1865), 296-299.

[23]"Deutsche Ansiedler im schlesischen Grenzwald" (1871) Aufsätze zur Gesch., Lit., und Kunst: Gesammelte Aufsätze, II (Leipzig, 1888), 436.

[24]Grimms Wörterbuch, IV^2 (Leipzig, 1877), 137-138; 149-150.

[25]Kluge, Etymologisches Wörterbuch der dt. Sprache, 15th ed. (Berlin, 1951) adds IE *gagh- (p. 291).

[26]Glossar z. älteren Edda (Paderborn, 1896), p. 74; p. 92. Ferdinand Holthusen, Vergl. Etym. Wörterbuch des Altwestnordischen (Göttingen, 1948), p. 108, also gives the two forms: "hauk-stald-r entstellt *hǫgstaldr."

[27]Grimms Wörterbuch, op. cit., 154-155.

[28]"Runeninschriften im Aelteren Futhark" Schriften der Königsberger Gel. Ges., Geisterwiss. Kl., 13. Jahrg., Heft 4 (Halle/Saale, 1937), p. 490; p. 555f.

[29]Holthusen, op. cit., p. 112.

[30]In Johannes Hoops, Reallexikon der Germ. Altertumskunde, IV (Strassburg, 1918-1919), p. 176.